

e-Bugle

Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 58

April 2011

No. 4



Calendar

Fri., Mar. 25	April <i>Bugle</i> out in Penn Place lobby	Mon., Apr. 11	Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 7:30 pm
Sun., Mar. 27	Archives Presentation: Looking Back at Early <i>Bugles</i> ; Town Hall, 2 pm	Tues., Apr. 12	Lunch Bunch, Town Hall , 12:30 pm; <i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm
Tues., Mar. 29	Street sweeping (see p 3)	Thurs., Apr. 21	Casual Music Jam, Town Hall, 8 pm
Sat., Apr. 2	Large-item pickup; Last day to register to vote in the town election, Town Office, 8 am–12 noon; GIVES collection, Penn Place lobby, 9 am–1 pm	Fri., Apr. 22	May <i>Bugle</i> out in Penn Place
Thurs., Apr. 7	Casual Music Jam, Town Hall, 8 pm	Wed., Apr. 27	Citizens Assoc. meeting, Candidates' Forum; Town Hall, 8 pm
Fri., Apr. 8	Film Society: <i>Man on Wire</i> , Town Hall	Thurs., Apr. 28	Not for Seniors Only Games and Tea, Town Hall, 1:30–3:30 pm
Sat., Apr. 9	Rock Creek cleanup, 9 am–noon (see p 7)	Sat., Apr. 30	Women's Club Plant Swap (see p 4); Weed warrior day, Porcupine Woods, 10 am–2 pm
		Mon., May 2	Town Council Elections, Penn Place lobby, 7 am–7:30 pm; Reception with results, Town Hall, time TBD

Budget Issues Dominate Council Meeting

The March Council meeting was largely devoted to issues related to the fiscal year 2012 budget. The meeting opened with presentations by residents, first related to the Parks and Open Spaces Committee (POSCO) and then the Archives Committee. First, Ida Sullivan, POSCO committee chair, commented on a proposal that members had voted to present to the Town Council, which asked the Council to include \$24,000 in the next budget for park improvements (see Letter to the Editor, p 5). Despite this vote, Sullivan expressed the view that the proposal did not reflect sufficient research and was not in keeping with the committee's mission of reviewing the condition of town parks and open space and advising the Mayor and Town Council. In her opinion, before funding could be requested, more research was needed. Charles Berry then presented the proposal to the Council, pointing out that the request had been voted on by committee members on March 12.

Members of the Archives Committee then expressed concern regarding the amount of

funding in the draft 2012 budget for Archives and Public Records, which was planned to go down by 45 percent from its current level. There was considerable discussion between committee members and the Council concerning how much money was currently available for work on the Archives, what work was needed, who might be able to do it, how much it would cost, and whether a consultant should be used. Committee members found the low level of resources committed for next year dispiriting; Councilmembers expressed support for the committee and its work, but wanted a clearer understanding of what money would be spent on, suggesting that the committee develop specific proposals.

After thanking the Archives Committee for its work, the Mayor reported to the Council that Pepco's removal of Siberian elm trees on Kenilworth was almost complete, and that the savings to the town from Pepco's doing the work would free up funds for sidewalk repair and replacement. He also announced that while he was out of town

(continued next page)

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(through March 27), Hans Wegner would be Acting Mayor.

In Councilmembers’ reports, Beth Irons reported that the Land Use Task Force would be asking the Citizens Association to sponsor a meeting in May for an update on Montgomery County’s rewrite of its zoning laws, as well as a briefing on the task force recommendations, enhanced by graphic presentations where needed.

Hans Wegner reported that a letter had been sent to the State Highway Administration on Strathmore potholes and repositioning the “No right turn on red” signs at the traffic light (true, some people probably choose to ignore them, but they are difficult to see). A visit with SHA officials on March 28 is to cover these issues. The town considers that it has kept its end of the Strathmore bargain by doing extensive pruning of the trees, not only for storm damage but to train their growth appropriately. Councilmember Wegner also noted that the blinking lights on the crosswalk by Keswick were no longer working and would probably not be repaired; he was told that these had been “experimental,” and parts were hard to find.

Charles Berry then asked, a propos of Councilmembers’ areas of responsibility, for a status update on stormwater projects and for an estimate of costs spent on design related to these projects. According to the Mayor, of the three projects (drains at Shelley Court, northern Kenilworth, and Montrose-Clermont), the Shelley Court project is in the budget for the next fiscal year. For the north Kenilworth drain, the town’s actions will depend to some extent on decisions by affected homeowners on managing runoff on their property, but in the meantime the town can focus some effort on reducing water runoff from town property. The Montrose-Clermont drain is still under discussion, as an easement would be required and no agreement has been reached. On the amount spent on planning, the Mayor said that the expenses came to \$24,000 (\$10,000 for Shelley Court, \$5,000 for north Kenilworth, and \$8,800 for Montrose-Clermont), which was primarily for surveying the land and developing easements.

The approval of the minutes for the previous month’s meeting was deferred because they were circulated too late for everyone to have time to read.

In the Action/Discussion portion of the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted an ordinance (2011-02) to clean up Garrett Park’s code of ordinances by moving the definition of a “business entity” to the definitions section of the code. Next discussed was an ordinance (2011-03) that generally aligned the language of the town’s absentee ballot provisions with that of the state. This prompted some discussion, as Councilmember Mandel objected to a provision, which was not part of the state’s language, limiting whom an

absentee voter could designate as an authorized agent to pick up and deliver his or her absentee ballot: this provision stated that the agent could not be an employee of the town or an elected town official, except in the case of an immediate family member. Councilmember Mandel found this to be unnecessary and to introduce an unwarranted element of distrust. Councilmember Schulp spoke in support of the provision as useful for avoiding any appearance of impropriety. After some discussion, the Council voted three to two to remove the language. The Council then voted four to one to adopt the ordinance as amended.

Before moving on to the budget ordinance (2011-03), the Council approved the appointment of election judges Brenda Artim, Margaret Goldsborough, and Cliff Tarp. Alternate judges were also announced: Natalie Grande, Les Henig, and Judy Heyman.

Last, the budget ordinance was introduced. After remarking on the long hours spent by the Council and Clerk/Administrator to develop the budget, the Mayor noted that the Council had agreed on the need to raise the town’s real estate tax after the fourth year of diminished revenue from the state and county (see Mayor’s letter, p 8). In the ensuing discussion of the budget, Councilmember Mandel raised the issue of funding for the Archives, wondering if there was a way to increase this, recognizing the importance of the issue and the work of the committee. Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Council would be inclined to use money from the town’s contingency budget to respond to specific proposals for projects whose cost exceeded the funds already designated for the Archives.

The Council voted unanimously in favor of introducing the budget ordinance, which is to be voted on at the next Council meeting.

Finally, the Council agreed, in response to one of the POSCO suggestions, that the tennis courts on Cambria, currently labeled “Garrett Park Tennis Court,” be renamed. Noting that the courts were frequently used for activities other than tennis, the Council decided to replace the current sign with one saying “Cambria Courts.”

Barbara Collier

The *Garrett Bugle* is a publication of the Citizens Association of Garrett Park, published 10 times a year. Publication of the *Bugle* is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$20 per family or \$10 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

Citizens Association Officers:
President: Mario Grande (mfgrande@aol.com)
Vice-President: Todd Harris
Treasurer: Lara Hines
Secretary: Leslie Bethke-Pope

Bugle staff:
Editor: Barbara Collier (Box 191)
Reporters: Margaret Soltan (Box 518), Mary Moyer (Box 98)
Ads: Mary Moyer (Box 98)
Subscriptions: Jane Salomon (Box 227) **Distribution:** Peggy Pratt
First-class subscriptions cost \$15 (bulk mail subscriptions are no longer available). Letters to the editor can be submitted by mail or hand to *Bugle* staff or by e-mail through the town Web site: www.garrettpark-md.gov/submit-BugleArticle.php. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

Town Administrator Notes

Nominations for Town Council. Nominations were made at the Citizens Association Meeting on Wednesday, March 23 (results are not available as we go to press). If you are interested in running but did not have someone submit your nomination at this meeting, you can be nominated through a written petition signed by 10 registered voters and filed with the Town Office by 12 noon on Monday, April 11. Three seats on the Council are up for election this year. Important election dates are posted in the Post Office lobby and on the town's Web site (www.garrettpark-md.gov).

Street Sweeping. The town's streets will be swept on Tuesday, March 29. Please park off the street in your driveway or in the Cambria parking lot if at all possible to allow as complete a sweeping job as possible. We only do this once a year, and your cooperation will make it the best job possible.

Large Item Pickup. There will be a large item pickup on Saturday, April 2.

State Tax Form. Important: When filling out your state income tax forms, please remember to write *Garrett Park* in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area." This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues that the state distributes to Maryland counties, cities, and towns.

Voter Registration for May Elections. The last day for Voter Registration for the May 2011 town elections is Saturday, April 2. If you need a registration form, please pick one up at the Town Office during office hours (8 am to 4 pm), the Montgomery County Board of Elections (www.montgomerycountymd.gov), or the Post Office. Noncitizen residents of Garrett Park who are not already on the town's voters list and who wish to vote in the May election must also register by April 2 at the Town Office. The Town Office will be open from 8 am to noon on Saturday, March 26 and April 2, for those who are unable to come in during the week.

Absentee Ballots for May Elections. **Note new procedure:** Absentee ballots must be applied for in writing on a form that will become available in the Town Office and the town Web site on April 1. Ballots will be delivered to the voter as directed on the form (in person, by mail, or by an agent) and must be received by the Town Office or the Judges of Election before the polls close at 7:30 pm on Town Election Day. For more information, please check the town Web site or the Penn Place bulletin board for the new elections ordinance.

FY 2012 Budget. The FY 2012 budget was introduced at the March Council meeting and proposes an Operating Budget of \$908,035 (5.8 percent less than the current budget), a Capital Program of \$344,616 (an increase of 122 percent), with revenues of \$1,069,800 and transfers of \$182,851 from available funds in the town's trea-

surey. This budget includes a 1.8 cent increase in the tax rate to 21 cents per \$100 of valuation (\$90 increase for a \$500,000 home). Copies of the proposed fiscal year 2012 budget are posted on the town Web site and available in the Post Office. If the Post Office copies run out, please come by the Town Office for a copy.

Yard Waste Collection. That annual harbinger of spring, weekly yard waste collection, has returned, as it does every March. Yard waste is now collected every Monday through the end of October. Use paper bags for yard waste—no plastic, please! Don't forget to bundle brush.

Storm Debris. If you haul branches too large to bundle for yard waste collection to the curb, butt-end facing the street, the maintenance staff will come by and chip them.

Bamboo *cannot* be chipped—it jams the chipper and sends out dangerous shards. Please cut it up into 4-foot lengths and either bundle or bag it for regular yard waste collection on Mondays.

Walk Smart/Drive Safely. As the weather improves, Garrett Park residents often stroll through the parks and streets to enjoy our beautiful surroundings. Walkers, please remember to be mindful of turning vehicles, wear light colors or reflective clothing to be more visible early and late, and everyone please obey traffic signs, signals, and street crossing markings. Drivers, please yield to pedestrians, observe the posted 20 mph speed limit, and—as usual—be courteous.

Permits. If you are planning to do any construction this spring, please remember that a Garrett Park building permit is required whenever a new structure is to be built, including houses, additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. This is in addition to the required Montgomery County permit. Please call the Town Office for a permit application, copies of the town's building ordinance (Chapter 4 of the Town Code), and any other information.

Ted Pratt, Town Administrator,
garrett-park@comcast.net, 301-933-7488

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3

Citizens Association News

At the March 23 meeting, the Citizens Association accepted nominations for the upcoming May 2 town elections (results are not available as we go to press). Three Town Council seats are up for election this year. Please consider running for one of these important positions. If you are interested but did not have someone submit your nomination at this meeting, you can be nominated through a written petition signed by 10 registered voters and filed with the Town Office by 12 noon on Monday, April 11.

On April 27, the Citizens Association will hold the annual Candidates' Forum. Candidates for the three Town Council seats will be on hand to discuss their views on issues important to the citizens of Garrett Park.

For more details on the election, please see the Town Administrator's Notes (p 3) and election information on the announcements section of the town Web site, www.garrettpark-md.gov.

Future Meetings. Do you have a suggestion or idea for a meeting topic that you feel would be of interest to the town? If so, please forward your thoughts to Mario Grande at mfgrande@aol.com or send a note to Box 456.

Annual Dues. The Citizens Association 2011 annual dues are being collected. The annual dues are \$10 for individuals and \$20 per family. Thank you to all those who have already paid. For those who have not, please submit dues by mailing them to the Citizens Association at Box 456.

Garrett Park listserv. To join this electronic forum, which allows neighbors to communicate information about town concerns, safety issues, upcoming events, and recommended services, e-mail Todd Harris or sign in at groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettParkneighbors/join.

Questions or comments for the Citizens Association? If so, please send a note to P.O. Box 456 or e-mail Mario Grande (mfgrande@aol.com).

Women's Club Events

Come to the Annual Plant Swap on Saturday, April 30, from 10 am until ... (whenever) on the Penn Place basketball court. Bring as many plants as you'd like to swap, and take home something new for your own garden. Please label your donations, if possible, with plant name, color, how big, preferred location, etc. A wagon, boxes, or trays are a good idea!

We're repeating from last month the following list of events sponsored by the Women's Club, so if you didn't mark your calendars, you have another chance. (And note especially the date change for the Attic in the Street sale.)

- Saturday, May 21—Annual Progressive Dinner (see form, p 7)
- Sunday, June 5—Annual Musicale (fundraiser for music scholarship)
- June—New event! First annual Youth Artists Show (more info will be forthcoming)
- Sunday, July 3—Pooch Parade
- Saturday, October 15—Attic in the Street (note **date change!**)
- Friday, December 9—Holiday Sing-Along (co-sponsored with GP musicians)
- Saturday, December 10—Santa comes to Town Hall!
- Sunday, December 18—Holiday decorating contest

Remember, all Garrett Park women are automatically members of the Women's Club. If you want to know more about the Women's Club (and especially if you are a newcomer to Garrett Park), contact president Valerie Gottron or vice-president Lillian Del Priore. Look for news of our activities in the *Bugle* or on the listserv. And if you would like a Garrett Park t-shirt (attractive dark green with a tree design), these are available for \$10 from Elizabeth Henley in the Town Office.

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POSCO News

The Garret Park Parks and Open Space Committee (POSCO) met on March 12, 2011. Some general maintenance items of parks in town were discussed, and two motions were passed unanimously by six committee members present at the meeting.

POSCO recommends that the town gain approval from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for the town to place wood chips in Wells Park along a trail that starts near the train track and leads to the play equipment. This path with wood chips would connect to the existing macadam path to complete a walkable path through the park. The M-NCPPC has approved that chips be added to the trail in the past, and it was discussed that resident volunteers could be solicited or town maintenance staff could spread the wood chips on the trail.

The first motion that passed is to recommend to Town Council that the name of Garrett Park Tennis Court (adjacent to the Garrett Park Swimming Pool) be changed to Cambria Park Tennis Court. The committee felt the new name is more useful as this park is often confused with the Garrett-Waverly Park next to Penn Place, which has two tennis courts.

The second motion that passed and was presented at the Town Council meeting on March 14 is presented below.

Charles Berry

"The Town of Garrett Park Parks and Open Space Committee is pleased to present recommendations to the Town Council for improvements of parks in our town for consideration to be approved and included in the FY 2012 Budget.

"The Committee proposes that the town perform approximately \$36,000 of improvements in Wells Park and in the Garrett Park Town Tennis Court park. Funds would come from two sources, the town and Maryland's Program Open Space. Program Open Space is offering approximately \$12,000 to towns willing to do a 2 to 1 match. Therefore, the Committee asks that the Council include \$24,000 in its 2011-2012 Budget for park improvements, which will be spent on the two highest priority projects identified by the Committee.

"The Committee recommends that the town gain approval from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for the town to pay to replace some or all of the playground equipment and amenities in Wells Park.

"The Committee recommends that minor repairs and upgrades be made to the Garrett Park Town Tennis Court (the park adjacent to the Garrett Park Swimming Pool).

"Many residents have commented how much they like the new play equipment and recent site upgrades in Cambria Park. The general consensus is that the play equipment is used much more than the previous equipment and has become a nice gathering place for residents. A number of people in the vicinity of Wells Park have commented that they feel they will visit Wells Park more often, and would greatly benefit from new play equipment and amenities in Wells Park, much the same way as those who live close to Cambria Park have experienced.

"The Garrett Park Town Tennis Court park area has increasingly become a favorite park area to visit for residents who live close to the park and some who do not live so close. While no final recommendations have been formalized by the Committee for the park, there is consensus that some minor repairs are in order to enhance the enjoyment of the park.

"The Committee recognizes that this fiscal year, like in many years, there are competing interests and needs for work to be performed in town. In the past decade there has been only one major improvement to our parks and this was in Cambria Park where most of the play equipment was replaced and site improvements were made.

"Two surveys of the town were made by the Committee in the past decade and residents responded that they value their parks and would like some upgrades to the parks in town.

"It is with this goal in mind that the Parks and Open Space Committee voted unanimously at a committee meeting on March 12, 2011, to recommend to the Town Council that improvements to Wells Park and the Garrett Park Tennis Court park be approved and included in the Town of Garrett Park FY-2012 Budget."

Visit Garrett Park's Web site:

www.garrettpark-md.gov



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Bugle History

For those of you not able to make it to the archives presentation on March 27, a short history of the *Bugle* might not come amiss. The *Bugle* was begun in 1954 by an enterprising group of youngsters with Clyde Hall (PR chief at the National Science Foundation) as a mentor. They sold the paper weekly, filled with school news, jokes, and the occasional information piece, door to door and by subscription for a nickel. After the kids gave up, Clyde took over as editor, and turned it into monthly issue mostly to keep absentee Garrett Parkers up on the news. Soon the “Aux Armes, Citoyens” headlines appeared as feisty Garrett Park leapt from one battle into another—with developers, the county, or the US Postal Service. It was originally hand cranked out on a mimeograph machine by Norah Payne. There was a banner, but not in green. The motto “*Vox clamantis in deserto*” (a voice crying in the wilderness) is from Clyde’s alma mater, Dartmouth. The two trumpet bells are pointed both right and left, reflecting the ongoing spirit of Garrett Park—there can be two sides to every proposed idea.

By the time Clyde tired of the incessant deadlines (one of the drawbacks of the job), the *Bugle* had become so much a part of life in Garrett Park that its cessation would have been a serious loss. Thus, under various editors, it has continued on its merry way.

In the 70’s green was added, and the Citizens Association was the producer, with a steady stream of editors. In the early 80’s, the cost of printing the banner in green went up, turning it black again. We decided in September 1988 that we could go back to green if we could get some extra revenue, since the Citizens Association dues could not cover the extra printing costs. So we started the Greening campaign.

The *Bugle* may be only a small town newspaper, but it has been a sounding board, a complaint receptacle, an announcement bulletin board, a public forum, and a part of our town’s history for 57 years. In the very first issue (June 7, 1954), an article appeared entitled *Bike Accident*: “Mary Stites fell off her bike after school last Friday at about 3:15 P.M. She cut herself pretty badly under her chin and spent a couple hours in Suburban

Hospital getting sewed up. She chipped a few teeth and skinned her legs and arms. We saw her yesterday and she is coming along fine.” I still have the chipped teeth, and the chin has gotten sewn up a couple more times, but I am still “coming along fine.” It was an honor to be in the first issue (even though pain was involved), and even more of an honor to have worked with a fine crew in putting out the *Bugle* for the last umpteen years.

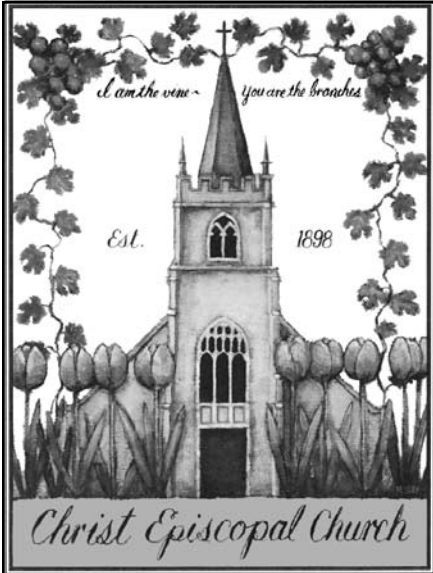
An extraordinary staff has proven that volunteers make the world go round, and in this case get this paper to the Web site and post office every month. Editor Barbara Collier, with backup and proofreading by Carol Ballentine and Jonathan Paul, takes the raw material (now mostly submitted by e-mail) and transforms it into a readable final product. I act as reporter, collecting news and notes from around town. Margaret Soltan provides coverage of the Town Council meetings. Jane Salomon keeps subscriptions in order with computer lists and mailing labels, and Peggy Pratt makes sure the copies get mailed to those who paid for it, and for the town copies to be made available. Several of us used to get together every month to fold the copies for mailing, but then the Post Office decided that our branch would no longer mail out bulk mail. So we now put copies in a basket at Penn Place lobby for everyone to take—and our monthly folding parties are a thing of the past. The *Bugle* is a group effort, and this group has made the current production a joy to work on.

Mary Stites Moyer
(with help from the late George Payne)

Contribute to the Archives!

Consider how interesting it would have been to have a memoir, autobiography, or even an expansive resumé of the people who once lived in your house. What fun to know who looked through the same windows or slammed the basement door. If you write about yourself and your family, we would be thrilled to add it to the Archives. Immortality can be yours!

Marian Green



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Art at Penn Place

The watercolor paintings of Jim Haynes will be displayed at Penn Place beginning April 5. Jim enjoys the looseness and spontaneity of watercolors and has placed highly in many art shows and exhibitions. His watercolor work is displayed on www.naddydaddy.etsy.com.

Jim writes: "I have a deep appreciation of the natural world, which constantly inspires me to absorb the visual experience before me and share my reactions and emotions with the viewer. I enjoy the problem solving inherent in executing a

successful watercolor, as well as the unexpected events that are bound to occur with this medium.

"My goal as an artist is to translate my feelings about a subject as honestly and effectively as I am able. I attempt to paint as much as possible to hone my skills as a watercolorist and become more intuitive in my translation of what I see and feel, and how I transfer that emotion onto a piece of paper. I am a great admirer of the watercolor works of Edward Hopper, Trevor Chamberlain, Frank Nofer, and Dick Cole."

Berton Zbar

Rock Creek Cleanup

Extreme cleanup! Join us on Saturday, April 9, from 9 am to noon. Meet at the parking area on Beach Drive, 1/4 mile south of the traffic light/intersection with Knowles (across from the playground area). All ages are welcome; students can earn Community Service hours.

Bring gloves if you have them (a limited number will be available), and wear old clothes. Bags will be provided for trash and recycling.

The event is sponsored by Friends of Rock Creek Environment (FORCE) and the Alice Ferguson Foundation. Stream team leaders are Charlie Andrews, Elin Quigley, and Ken Keppel.

Progressive Dinner, May 21

Join your neighbors for this fun annual event! Complete the registration form below.

Mary Moyer

I/we would like to participate in the 2011 Progressive Dinner on Saturday, May 21.

Name(s): _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Contact e-mail: _____

Choose your top three preferences from the following nine options, indicating first, second, and third choices. (You will receive confirmation after May 2.)

- Provide a course!*

___ Provide appetizer (for 16 to 20)

___ Provide salad (for 12 to 16)

___ Provide meat main course (for 10 to 12)

___ Provide vegetarian main course (for 10 to 12)

___ Provide dessert (for 16 to 20)

Be a host!

___ Host salad at my home (for 10 to 16)

___ Host main course at my home (for 8 to 14)

___ Host vegetarian main course at my home (for 10 to 12)

___ Host dessert at my home (for about 30 to 50)

Special dietary needs? (Vegetarian, vegan, food allergies, other)
Please list here: _____

Interested in volunteering to coordinate this event? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Still only \$5 per person to participate!

Please return form to Garrett Park Progressive Dinner/GP Women's Club, Box 494, Garrett Park, MD 20896.
Make checks payable to Garrett Park Women's Club.

Questions? Contact Jean Horan

Deadline for registration: **Monday, May 2**, please!

Letter from the Mayor

At its March meeting, the Town Council voted to introduce the fiscal year 2012 budget, including an increase in the property tax rate from 19.2 cents to 21 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. No one likes to raise taxes; I commend the Council for taking this difficult but necessary step to keep the town on a sound financial footing for the future. It is an action that I wholeheartedly support. It is a sad and frustrating irony that Garrett Park and other municipalities are left no alternative to raising property taxes—the only revenue source over which the town has control—to offset revenue reductions forced upon us by higher levels of government that have been irresponsible in their own fiscal management. The town has managed its finances prudently; that fact, together with the fortuitous circumstance that the Washington area has not been as hard hit by the recession as other parts of the country, has made it possible for state and county politicians, who did not put their own fiscal house in order, to devolve upon the municipalities the impact of their financial recklessness. The state, for example, has kept for itself Highway User Revenues that should go to municipalities; our highway user revenues from the state have declined over 90 percent. In fiscal years 2005 through 2008, these payments averaged over \$55,000 *per year*. In the last three years they have declined to approximately \$3,000 a year. Revenue sharing from Montgomery County—“tax duplication” payments to municipalities that offset the cost of town services that would otherwise be provided by the county—has been cut 15 percent or more.

Precisely because the town has managed its finances sensibly, we were able to withstand a

certain amount of reduction in these revenues. But the cumulative effect of several years’ cuts is taking its toll, here and in other municipalities. We have made cuts in our operating budget but cannot continue to defer capital improvements and repairs indefinitely.

The steps taken by the Council in proposing a careful budget and a modest tax increase contribute to financial stability that will, in turn, permit the town to continue a responsible program of capital repairs and improvements. The proposed tax rate of 21 cents per \$100 of assessed value is below the inflation-adjusted average of town property tax rates over the past two decades. Moreover, the Council will consider tax relief for those taxpayers for whom the increase may impose a financial hardship—building on the so-called “circuit breaker” provisions of county property tax relief provisions.

The April 11 Council meeting will take up final passage of the introduced budget (available on the town Web site and posted at Penn Place), together with a hearing on the proposed increase in property tax rate. I urge you to let us know your views.

At the March meeting, the Council also approved the appointment of Judges of Election, as required by our Charter. I want to thank Brenda Artim, Margaret Goldsborough, and Cliff Tarpy for agreeing to serve two-year terms as Judges of Election. I also want to thank Natalie Grande, Les Henig, and Judy Heyman for agreeing to serve as Alternates.

Chris Keller

Bob Reinhardt, AIA | Garrett Park, MD
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- Water heaters
- Sewer & water service replacement
- Bathroom & kitchen remodeling
- Furnace & A/C replacement
- Garbage disposals
- Pinhole leak pipe repairs & replacement
- Installation of gas logs and gas grills
- Sump pump replacement

No job is too small or large!

JAMES BURKETT LICENSED MASTER PLUMBER
301 587 1144 or 301 237 7510